

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated August 24, 2005. Claims 1, 3 to 9, 11 to 34, 36 to 42 and 44 to 64 remain pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 6, 9, 14, 17 to 19, 26, 34, 39, 42, 47, 50 and 57 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3 to 9, 11 to 34, 36 to 42 and 44 to 64 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 4,926,325 (Benton). The rejections are respectfully traversed and Applicant requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejections in light of the following comments.

The present invention relates to identifying a user of an image processing apparatus. According to the invention, user information of a seller or buyer of the image processing apparatus is multiplexed to an image to be output by the image processing apparatus in a such a manner that the user information of the seller or buyer of the image processing apparatus multiplexed in the output image is not visible in the output image. In the various related aspects of the invention, the user information of the seller or buyer of the image processing apparatus may be stored in the image processing apparatus, received by the image processing apparatus via a network, obtained and stored in the image processing apparatus when the apparatus is sold via a network, or set in the information processing apparatus. Thus, by virtue of multiplexing user information of the seller or the buyer of the printer to the output image, a person who may use the apparatus to produce counterfeit images is more likely to be apprehended.

Referring specifically to the claims, amended independent Claim 1 is directed to an image processing apparatus comprising user information storing means for storing user information of a seller or a buyer of the image processing apparatus, and

multiplexing means for multiplexing the stored user information to an output image to be output by the image processing apparatus, wherein, the user information of the seller or buyer of the image processing apparatus is obtained and stored in the storing means when the image processing apparatus is sold through a network, and wherein the user information multiplexed to the output image is not visible in the output image.

Amended independent Claims 9, 17, 19, 42 and 50 are method or computer-readable storage medium claims that substantially correspond to Claim 1.

Amended independent Claim 6 includes features along the lines of Claim 1, but is more specifically directed to an electronic commerce system which performs electronic commerce connecting one terminal with another terminal through a network, the system comprising information setting means for setting, in an image processing apparatus, information of a seller or a buyer of the image processing apparatus, the information being obtained through the network, and multiplexing means for multiplexing the information of the seller or buyer of the image processing apparatus set by the information setting means to an output image to be output by the image processing apparatus, wherein the set information multiplexed to the output image is not visible in the output image.

Amended independent Claim 14, 18, 39 and 47 are method, system and computer-readable storage medium claims that substantially correspond to Claim 6.

Amended independent Claim 26 also includes features along the lines of Claim 1, but is more specifically directed to an image processing method for a image processing apparatus, comprising the steps of a user information receiving step for the image processing apparatus receiving user information of a seller or a buyer of an image processing product from the image processing product; and a multiplexing step for the image processing apparatus to multiplex the received user information of the seller or

buyer of the information processing product to an output image to be output by the image processing apparatus, wherein, the user information is received by the image processing apparatus when the image processing product is sold through a network, and wherein the user information multiplexed in the output image is not visible in the output image.

Amended independent Claim 57 is substantially corresponds to Claim 26.

Amended independent Claim 34 also includes features substantially corresponding to Claim 1, but is more specifically directed to an image processing apparatus comprising a memory storing user information of a seller or a buyer of the image processing apparatus, and a controller multiplexing the stored user information of the seller or buyer of the information processing apparatus to an output image to be output by the image processing apparatus, wherein, the user information is obtained and stored in the memory when the image processing apparatus is sold through a network, and wherein the user information multiplexed in the output image is not visible in the output image.

The applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of independent Claims 1, 6, 9, 14, 17, 18, 19, 26, 34, 39, 42, 47, 50 and 57, and in particular, is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of an image processing apparatus multiplexing user information of a seller or a buyer of the image processing apparatus to an image to be output by the image processing apparatus, wherein the user information multiplexed to the output image is not visible in the output image.

Benton is merely seen to disclose a facsimile system for conducting financial transactions in buying/selling goods. According to the patent, both a buyer and a seller are issued identification cards. The cards are inserted into a card reading device so that a financial transaction (e.g., transfer of funds) between the buyer, seller and a financial institution (e.g., a bank) can take place. When the financial transaction is completed, a

facsimile machine can then generate and print out a transaction record, which may include information of the seller and information of the buyer. However, Benton is distinguishable from the presently claimed invention in various ways.

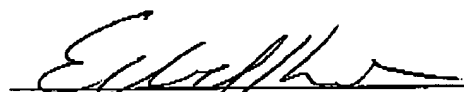
First, the buyer and seller is not related to any of the devices used in performing the process. Thus, the user information is not of a seller or buyer of the facsimile machine of Benton. Second, although the buyer and seller information may be printed out on a facsimile receipt in Benton, the information is not multiplexed to an output image in such a manner that the user information is not visible in the output image. In fact, this would be quite contrary to Benton's reasons for printing out the receipt in the first place. Therefore, Benton is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of the present invention.

In view of the foregoing deficiencies of the applied art, amended independent Claims 1, 6, 9, 14, 17, 18, 19, 26, 34, 39, 42, 47, 50 and 57, as well as the claims dependent therefrom, are believed to be allowable.

No other matters having been raised, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



Attorney for Applicant
Edward A. Kmett
Registration No. 42,746

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-2200
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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